

CALIFORNIA HIGHER EDUCATION: DEGREE LADDER

DOCTORAL DEGREES

J.D. / M.D. / Ph.D. / D.Pharm / etc.

Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, Research, Professorship

4-10 additional years after the BA/BS depending on the degree.

May include internships, residencies, and competency exams.

MASTERS DEGREES

M.A. / M.S. / M.F.A

30-52 additional units, depending on the degree

2 additional years as a fulltime student

TEACHER CREDENTIALS

Not a graduate degree.

Includes: pedagogical (how to teach) coursework
& student teaching

1+ additional year as a fulltime student

BACCALAUREATE DEGREES

B.A./B.S./B.F.A.

120-132+ units, depending on the major

4 years as a fulltime student

SENIOR

4 years at 15 units

JUNIOR

3 years at 15 units

ASSOCIATES DEGREE:

AA/AS

60 units:

general education &
major preparation

VOCATIONAL CERTIFICATES

17-30+ units:

depending on the certificate
No general education required

TRANSFER CURRICULUM

*Not a degree

60 units:

general
education &
major
preparation.

SOPHOMORE

2 years at
15 units

FRESHMAN

1 year at
15 units

These are the
choices a student
has after high
school.

Community Colleges (CC)

California State University (CSU)

University of California (UC)

Private Universities & Colleges (PVT)

*All units listed are semester units. (1.5 x semester units = quarter units)

Dashed lines indicate that CSU & UC do not offer degrees at this level.